



OREGON HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM NOMINATION FORM

NAME OF TREE

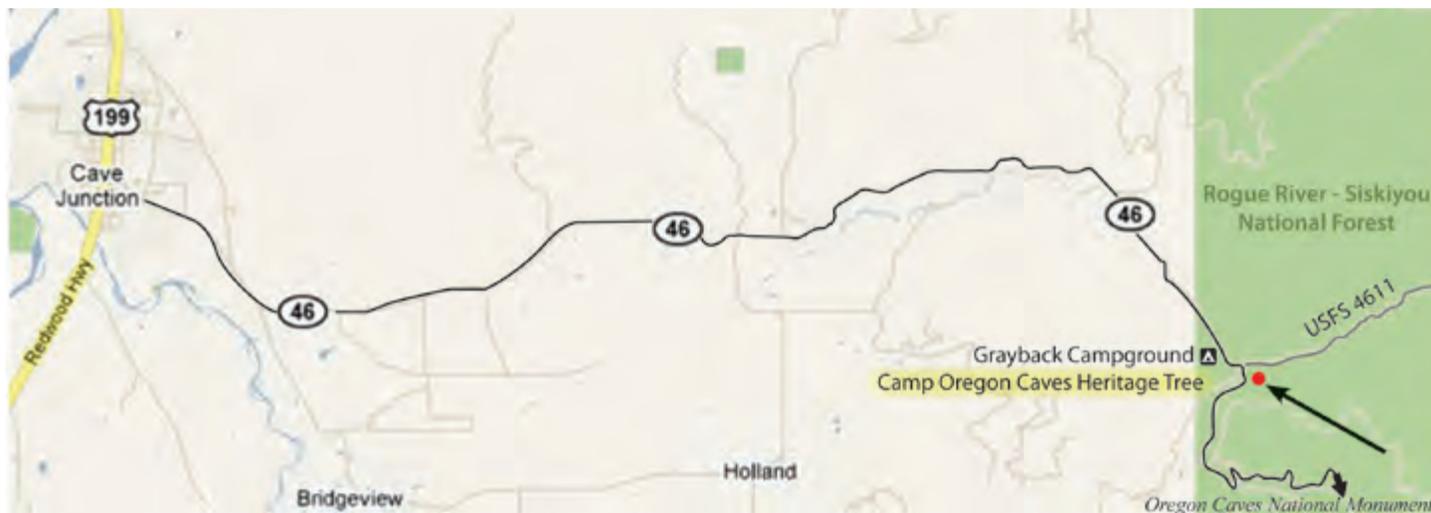
Type of tree: Port Orford Cedar *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*

Name: Camp Oregon Caves Port Orford Cedar

LOCATION OF THE TREE

Josephine County

Highway 46 (Oregon Caves Highway) about 11.5 miles from Cave Junction.



The Camp Oregon Caves Port Orford Cedar is located about eleven and a half miles from Cave Junction on Highway 46 in the site of the historic Camp Oregon Caves Civilian Conservation Corps camp. This now known as the Chinquapin Camp, a group camp site managed by the Rogue River -Siskiyou National Forest. Red dot indicates the site of the tree.



Detail map

The entrance to Chinquapin Campground is located on the north side of the Highway 46 immediately past USFS 4611 and the historic Cedar Guard Station and before crossing the bridge over Grayback Creek. The site of the tree is marked by the end of the paved parking lot and the beginning of a narrow dirt road that goes to the trailhead of a one mile loop trail behind the site of the historic Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp. The arrow and yellow circle point to the nominated tree.

OWNERSHIP

The tree is located on public land managed by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and is located adjacent to Oregon State Highway 46 under the management of Oregon Department of Transportation.

PUBLIC ACCESS

The tree is easily accessible to the public traveling on State Highway 46, the Oregon Caves Highway. It is located adjacent to the historic Cedar Guard Station, which is a point of interest for the public traveling to Oregon Caves National Monument and many people hike on the one mile loop trail behind the site of the historic CCC camp. The site has paved access which would be beneficial to users with mobility impairments. However, there are limitations to wheelchair use due to the absence of a designated accessible parking site and the presence of a locked gate on the entry road into the parking area. A short access path perhaps ten feet in length around the gate would solve the problem. There are currently efforts to complete a wheelchair accessible hiking trail from Grayback Campground to the site of Camp Oregon Caves and the loop trail.

Approximately 80,000 visitors pass this site both going to and returning from Oregon Caves National Monument. The loop trail behind the site has been used by school groups from local schools and more activity might take place at this site if it was included as part of the Oregon Caves National Monument education program, which delivers curriculum based classroom presentations, cave tours, and nature walks to about 4,000 students annually. School busses pass this site both going to and returning from visits to Oregon Caves.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Age: Approximately 100 years

Date planted (if known): Native tree growing naturally and used as a landscape tree.

Circumference: Approximately six feet at breast height

Height: Approximately 60 feet

Crown spread: Approximately 40 feet diameter down to and touching the ground

Health and condition: Very good health

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TREE

Port Orford Cedar has a very limited range, most of which is in southwest Oregon. The map to the right illustrates the natural range of these trees. This is the only place in the world where they grow naturally.

Based on historic photos, the nominated tree started from seed and was about 20-30 years old when the Camp Oregon Caves Civilian Conservation Corps facility was established in 1933. Photos from 1936 show several trees on the grounds were retained for landscaping. By 1940, most of the other trees within the grounds of the facility had been cut down except for a single Port Orford Cedar growing between the mess hall and recreation hall (see historic photos on next page). This is the nominated tree.

Camp Oregon Caves housed a crew of 200 youth beginning in 1934 through 1941. The crew worked at Oregon Caves National Monument during winter months and moved to a camp at Crater Lake National Park to work during summer months.



Natural range of the Port Orford Cedar



Camp Oregon Caves circa 1935. Arrow indicates the nominated tree. Trees to the left appear to be Douglas Fir



Camp Oregon Caves circa 1940. Arrow indicates the nominated tree. Douglas Fir trees have been removed.



Camp Oregon Caves circa 1940. Arrow indicates the nominated tree.

A characteristic of Port Orford Cedar is the ease by which the bark can be taken from the trunk in large slabs. This bark is very resistant to decay and extremes of weather and was used as an exterior siding on some buildings constructed during that era. The Cedar Guard Station provides an excellent example of this style of architecture and historic structures at Oregon Caves National Monument provide additional examples.

Port Orford Cedar bark siding gives buildings a distinctive appearance and this was one of the reasons why the historic Chateau at Oregon Caves was placed on the Register of National Historic Landmarks.

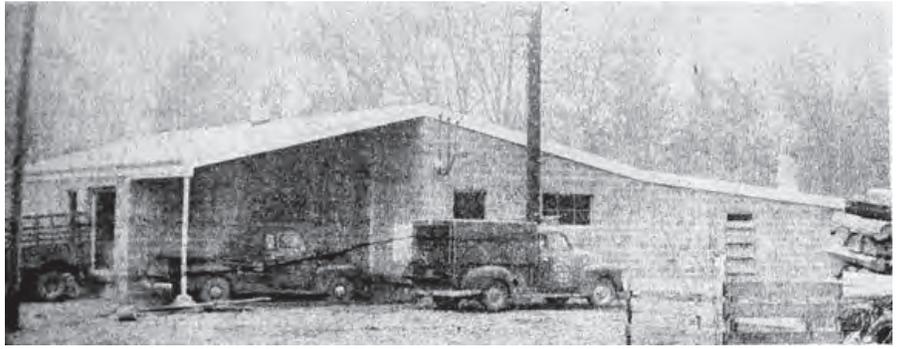
The Port Orford Cedar has a significant relevance to the history of Oregon because of the use of its bark as a architectural decorative and protective exterior of buildings constructed in this part of Oregon during the years of the Great Depression.



Above: The historic Chateau at Oregon Caves National Monument is the largest structure in existence using Port Orford Cedar siding.

Left: Cedar Guard Station is one of several Forest Service structures constructed in this area by the CCC in the 1930s. In this part of Oregon, only two of these cabin-sized structures remain: the Cedar Guard Station and the Store Gulch Guard Station in the Wild and Scenic Illinois River corridor.

Port Orford cedar is also nationally significant because during the late 1940s and early 1950s, it was the preferred wood used for making arrow shafts. The reason was the resistance of the wood to splintering. One of the largest suppliers of Port Orford cedar arrow shafts in the nation was the Southern Oregon Arrow Factory of Illinois Valley. Aluminum arrow shafts eventually displaced Port Orford cedar as the preferred material for arrow shafts in the early 1950s and this factory closed soon after.



Southern Oregon Arrow Factory, Kerby, Oregon circa 1953

Camp Oregon Caves closed down around 1941 and during World War Two a lumber shortage prompted several of the buildings to be disassembled and the lumber used elsewhere. If you visit this historic site, you will find very little evidence of the Camp Oregon Caves facility that housed 200 youth for a span of eight years during the Great Depression. The most salient markers of that time are the Cedar Guard Station and the Camp Oregon Caves Port Orford Cedar.

FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE TREE

The Camp Oregon Caves Port Orford Cedar was rediscovered less than two years ago while the author of this nomination was doing research to write a story about the history of the historic CCC camp for a local newspaper article. There has been no previous effort to call attention to the presence and historic significance of the tree.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

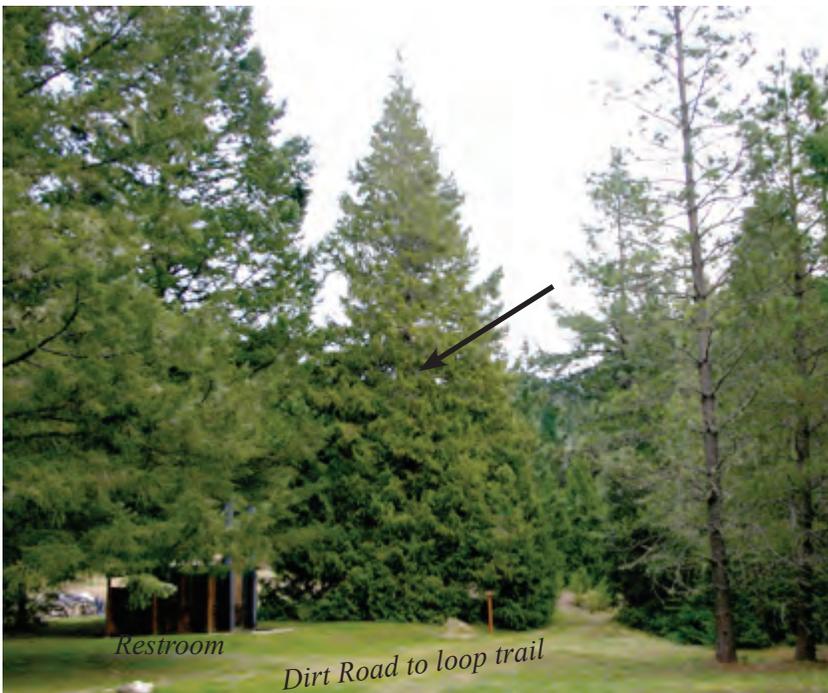


Photo of Tree

The photograph of the tree was taken from the parking area looking north. Grayback Creek is about 200 feet to the right and the camping area immediately to the left.



Historic photographs of the nominated tree, such as the 1940 image above (left), show the lower branches of the Camp Oregon Caves Port Orford Cedar to have been trimmed away up to about four feet above the ground. The photo on the right shows the base of the Camp Oregon Caves Port Orford Cedar with the lowest branches also being about four feet above the ground.

When the CCC facility was closed in 1941, the Camp Oregon Caves Port Orford Cedar was situated in a location with no other trees present to compete for sunlight. In a normal forest setting with many trees competing for sunlight, the lower branches of trees are abandoned and die as the tree grows because the shading of other trees makes it inefficient to have sun-gathering leaves in a place where sunlight cannot penetrate. However, the conditions for the Camp Oregon Caves Port Orford Cedar were artificially altered when removal of competing vegetation made it possible for the lower branches of the tree to survive and continue to grow. This may explain why the canopy of this tree creates an apron that touches the ground.

TREE OWNERSHIP & PROTECTION STATUS

Present owner of the property where the tree is located:

Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
Scott Conroy, Forest Supervisor
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504
(541) 618-2200

Wild Rivers Ranger District
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
Joel King, District Ranger
26568 Redwood Hwy
Cave Junction, OR 97523
541 592-4000

OWNER SUPPORT

Does the present owner support the nomination of this tree?

If so, please submit a letter of support from the owner.

If not, please explain.

CURRENT PROTECTION MEASURES

Please check the current protection measures in place at time of nomination.

Easements

There are no known or foreseeable public easement issues.

Conservation

This is a recreational site. No logging, thinning or other forest management activities are expected in this area.

NOMINATION PREPARED BY:

Roger Brandt

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